

Mr. Chair, I am in opposition to this bill.

Let me begin by praising our ranking member, the gentleman from Washington, Representative *Adam Smith*.

Ranking Member

Smith

brought forward a number of excellent proposals that would have significantly improved this bill, especially his effort to eliminate the indefinite detention provisions that were included in last year's bill. He also supported efforts to rein in excess Pentagon spending by supporting Representative

Barbara Lee

's amendment to trim \$8 billion from the bill. Had the amendment passed, it would have restored the funding level in the bill to what Democrats and Republicans had agreed to in this year's Federal budget bill.

Unfortunately, the majority chose to vote down both of those amendments and thus continue a misguided, counterproductive detainee policy and still more reckless spending. Moreover, the majority is attempting to interfere with the President's ability to negotiate arms control agreements with Russia, a potentially unconstitutional action. Additionally, this bill continues to fund Cold War legacy weapon systems like the F 35 and V 22 which we neither need nor can afford. Indeed, it's worth remembering that if we proceed with the procurement of the F 35, that program will cost taxpayers in excess of \$400 billion--\$50 billion more than the entire defense budget was a decade ago. We need to think anew about how best to defend our country, not continue to buy weapons to deter a Soviet Union that ceased to exist over 20 years ago.

Finally, this bill continues the deadly folly that is the war in Afghanistan, now the longest war in our country's history. There is no good reason for us still to be involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. We invaded Afghanistan to get Osama bin Laden and his key lieutenants--the men who were responsible for the 9/11 attacks on our Nation. Last year, President Obama authorized the operation that eliminated bin Laden. The chief planner of the 9/11 attacks, Khalid Sheik Mohammed, has been in our custody for years. The Al Qaeda we went to war with in 2001 effectively no longer exists, and thus the reason we sent our troops to Afghanistan no longer exists, which is why they should come home now but won't, thanks to this misguided bill. It is for all these reasons that I will vote against this bill.